

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6562
INFO AMCONSUL EDINBURGH
AMCONSUL BELFAST

UNCLAS LONDON 12431

E. O. 11652:NA
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, PGOV, UK
SUBJECT: DEVOLUTION: GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES ITS PLANS

REF: LONDON 12154

1. LEADER OF THE HOUSE MICHAEL FOOT JULY 26 ANNOUNCED THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO INTRODUCE SEPARATE DEVOLUTION BILLS FOR SCOTLAND AND WALES EARLY IN THE NEXT PARLIAMENTARY SESSION (REFTEL). A WHITE PAPER EXAMINING POSSIBLE TAX POWERS FOR THE DEVOLVED ASSEMBLIES, BUT RECOMMENDING THAT NO INDEPENDENT REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY BE GRANTED THESE BODIES, WAS ALSO PUBLISHED.
2. FOOT DESCRIBED THE OTHER SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW APPROACH AS FOLLOWS -- THE REVIEW POWERS OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL'S JUDICIAL COMMITTEE WILL BE EXPANDED; THE GOVERNMENT'S BROAD "SAFEGUARD POWERS" WITH RESPECT TO LEGISLATION PASSED BY THE ASSEMBLIES WILL BE RELAXED SLIGHTLY; AND FINANCIAL GRANTS WILL BE DETERMINED BY A COMPLEX FORMULA AND REVIEW PROCESS

AND THE ASSEMBLIES. THE GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO ALLOW A FREE VOTE ON THE QUESTION OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION
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FOR ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS.

3. THE LIBERAL SPOKESMAN INDICATED HIS PARTY'S SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS, WHILE THE CONSERVATIVE FRONT BENCH WAS PREDICTABLY HOSTILE. THE NATIONALISTS TOO EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS, DEMANDING SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED POWERS

FOR THE ASSEMBLIES. PLAID CYMRU WAS ALSO CRITICAL OF THE DECISION TO HAVE SEPARATE BILLS FOR SCOTLAND AND WALES. LABOR ANTI-DEVOLUTIONISTS GRUMBLED, AND THOSE FROM THE NORTHEAST CALLED FOR EQUAL TREATMENT FOR THE REGIONS OF ENGLAND.

4. COMMENT: FOOT'S STATEMENT WAS NOT UNEXOECTED AND CONTAINED NO SURPRISES. PARLIAMENTARY REACTION WAS ALSO PREDICTABLE. NEVERTHELESS, THE GOVERNMENT'S REVISED APPROACH TO THE DEVOLUTION DILEMMA SEEMS TO OFFER A REASONABLE PROSPECT FOR SUCCESS AT LEAST AS FAR AS DEVOLUTION FOR SCOTLAND IS CONCERNED.

BREWSTER

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Message Attributes

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